



File Code: 1950
Date: March 31, 2017

Dear Forest User:

The Soda Springs Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is seeking your input on the proposed John Wood Forest Management Project. The project proposal includes a combination of vegetation management activities and road work within an approximate 5,590-acre project area located in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, within the Wood Canyon and Johnson Creek drainages and located approximately six miles east of Soda Springs, Idaho (see Attachments 1 and 2). The legal land description for this proposal is: Township 8 South, Range 43 East, Sections 29, 31, 32, 33 and 34; and Township 9 South, Range 43 East, Sections 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 of the Boise Meridian, Caribou County, Idaho. Project implementation could begin as early as the summer of 2018 and would take several years to fully implement.

Information about this project can be found at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/ctnf/landmanagement/projects>.

Proposed Action

A combination of vegetation management activities would occur on approximately 760 acres. More specifically, approximately 395 acres are proposed for selection harvest, which would require approximately 1.6 miles of temporary road construction to facilitate the harvest. Additionally, approximately 365 acres are proposed for non-harvest stand-tending treatments (pre-commercial thinning, piling, pile burning, jackpot burning and chopping).

Several different types of road work are also proposed. The road work is proposed to meet transportation system needs for timber removal, resource needs, and public safety. It is proposed to reconstruct and improve the condition of approximately 5.1 miles of roads within the project area. This would include activities such as blading and shaping the road bed, spot graveling, culvert replacements, and other minor repairs. Approximately, 2.3 miles of road has been identified as needing to be relocated to address resource concerns. These roads will be located in the same general area, but large portions will be moved to a new foot print. Additionally, it is proposed to construct Road 574 in a more sustainable location (1.6 miles new construction), obliterate the previous location along with several other short segments of road (2.1 miles), and close 0.3 miles. Development of a gravel pit within the project area is also being considered.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project proposal is to improve the overall composition, health and resilience of the forest within the project area, utilize and improve timber resources, and improve the Forest transportation system.

The project proposal is needed because a fire regime condition class assessment of the forested landscape indicated that the landscape qualifies as Condition Class 2. This means that the vegetation composition, structure and fuels have moderate departure from the natural regime and predispose the system to risk of loss of key ecosystem components. Also, the project area is within a Caribou RFP 5.2 prescription area. *The emphasis in this prescription area is on*



scheduled wood-fiber production, timber growth and yield, while maintaining or restoring forested ecosystems (RFP at 4-71). This prescription area also sets the following guidelines: [p]ractices to prevent or control natural disturbances, such as insects and disease losses and wildfire, are emphasized. (RFP at 4-72) and where aspen exists, it should be maintained or enhanced as a component through restoration treatments (RFP at 4-72). Many of the stands in the project area that were previously harvested are becoming overly dense, which impacts growth and yield and increases risk to forest pests such as the western spruce budworm. Finally, there is a need to address the poor condition and resource concerns of the existing transportation system within the project area.

Administrative Review

This project will be analyzed through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Soda Springs District Ranger will be the deciding officer on this project, and should the proposed action be approved, the District Ranger's decision will be documented in a Record of Decision.

The proposed action is not authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and is subject to pre-decisional administrative review process (objection process) outlined in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. In order to be eligible to file an objection, timely specific written comments regarding the proposed action must be submitted during a designated opportunity for public comment. Individual members of organizations must have submitted their own comments to establish individual eligibility to object to the project. Objections received on behalf of an organization are considered as those of the organization only. Names and addresses of those who comment and/or file objections will become part of the public record.

Opportunity to Comment

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register.

The publication date in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this analysis. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. However, to ensure wide distribution of the notification of this project proposal, a legal notice will also be published in the newspaper of record, the Idaho State Journal. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the Draft EIS. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and contentions. Per 36 CFR 218, only those who provide specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity will be eligible to file an objection. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered, however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

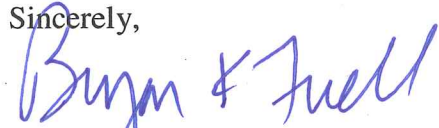
Written comments must be submitted to: Bryan K. Fuell, District Ranger, Soda Springs Ranger District, via mail to: 410 East Hooper Avenue, Soda Springs, ID 83276; or by fax: (208) 547-

2235. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The expected publication date is March 31, 2017.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-caribou-targhee-soda-springs@fs.fed.us with Subject: John Wood Forest Management Project. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for objection eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

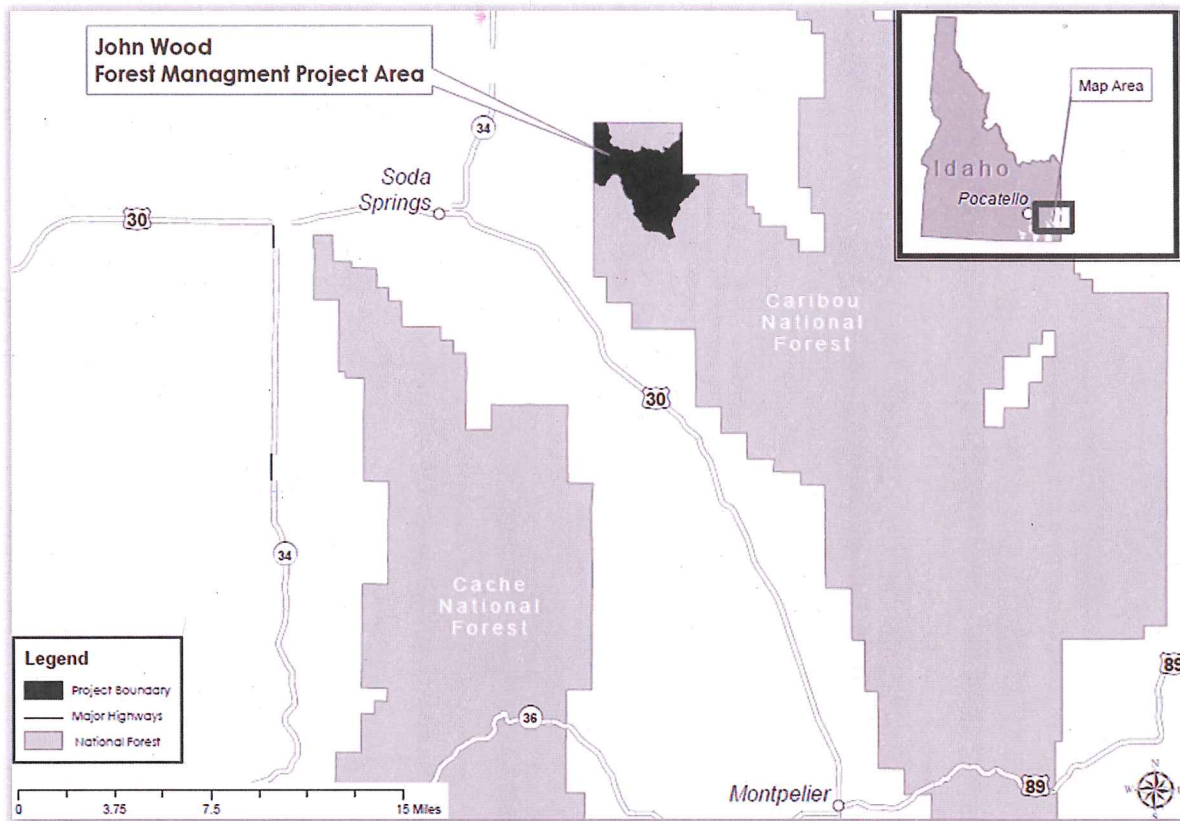
At this time, no public meeting will be held. This decision may be reconsidered depending on the outcome of scoping. An additional opportunity for public participation will occur during the public comment period on the Draft EIS, which will be initiated by the publication of a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.

Sincerely,



BRYAN K. FUELL
Soda Springs District Ranger

Attachment 1



John Wood Forest Mangement Project

